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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 000249

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - RADMANOVIC ON SIPA COMPLAINT AGAINST DODIK

REF: A. SARAJEVO 210 B. SARAJEVO 206

Classified By: Ambassador Charles English for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In a February 26 meeting, Bosnian Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nebojsa Radmanovic told the Ambassador that the political situation in Bosnia was very "complicated" following the February 19 filing of a criminal report against RS PM Milorad Dodik for corruption (Reftels). Reflecting statements Dodik and other party officials have made since news of the report broke, Radmanovic -- who is also Vice President of Dodik's Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) -- told the Ambassador that his party believed the report was part of a deliberate campaign by "parallel structures" in state institutions and the International Community to destabilize the political situation in Bosnia and pursue an anti-Serb agenda. He alluded to "Plan B" -- the withdrawal of Serb representatives from state-level executive and legislative institutions -- saying that last year he worked hard to make sure that that did not happen, but was not sure how much he could "calm things down this time." He said the international community could calm the situation by calling "regrettable" the procedural lapses of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) -- namely that its (Bosnian Serb) Director, Mirko Lujic, was not informed of the criminal complaint. END SUMMARY.

"PARALLEL STRUCTURES" AND SNSD'S PLAN B

¶2. (C) Radmanovic stressed that the failure to inform SIPA Director Lujic or other Serb officials of the complaint led his party to believe that the report was part of a strategy to deliberately complicate the political situation in Bosnia. He complained of parallel structures -- referring to alternate chains of command based on ethnicity or party loyalty -- in Bosnia's state institutions that pursue an anti-Serb agenda. He said that this was only the most recent example of well-known problems in other ministries, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense. Radmanovic argued that these "parallel structures" bolster support in the RS for withdrawing Serbs from positions in state-level executive and legislative institutions, the so-called "Plan B." He worked to prevent such a withdrawal last year, he said, but "the question is how much we calm things down in the RS Parliament; the opposition will stir things up." (NOTE: In a separate meeting earlier the same day, Radmanovic's advisor (and son-in-law) Danilo Petrovic, who participated in the meeting with the President, told us that "Plan B" was a serious option, and that party officials were even ruminating about a "Plan C" that is more drastic. END NOTE.)

CONSPRACY THEORIES

¶3. (C) Radmanovic argued that these "parallel structures"

worked in concert with the international community, specifically OHR. He opined that the Assistant Director of SIPA who had filed the report, (Croat) Dragan Lukac, had links to the Office of the High Representative (OHR). If that was not the case, he said, OHR should come out and say they will not back the results of his procedural errors. He added that of the last four RS finance ministers, all but one, Svetlana Cenik, was mentioned in the report, and "we all know about her connections to the international community." His advisor Petrovic raised the same example with us separately, saying that she was on the payroll of the international community. (Note: Cenik, in her current capacity as an economic consultant, once attended a meeting with PDHR Raffi Gregorian and, several years ago, was an employee of USAID. END NOTE.) Petrovic also suggested that Gregorian had orchestrated the situation in order to obstruct satisfaction of the PIC condition requiring a positive assessment of the situation in Bosnia as a precondition for closure of OHR.

14. (C) The Ambassador told Radmanovic that he had no prior knowledge of the criminal complaint, but that it was part of an ongoing legal process that we all knew was happening. He pushed back on the notion that this was part of a conspiracy of "parallel structures" and the international community. Our understanding, Ambassador told the President, was that there was a regrettable, commonplace procedural error in the filing, but that the legal result would have been the same had Lujic been notified, a point that Radmanovic admitted freely. Ambassador stressed that we support enforcement of the rule of law and that that support in this case dates back to our support for Transparency International's efforts

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to publish the seminal documents of the case in late 2007.

REFORM PROCESS THREATENED

15. (C) Radmanovic stressed the detrimental effect that the political situation may have on the reform process. "Instead of the slow, peaceful way of pursuing progress on the agenda (of the 5 objectives and two conditions set by the Peace Implementation Council as a precondition for the closure of OHR), Bosnia has returned to its old ways of accusations and recriminations." He said that there was pressure in Banja Luka for the Serbs to defend themselves in the media, and that it will be hard to keep the opposition calm during a special session of the Republika Srpska National Assembly on the Constitution on February 27. Radmanovic added that the discussion on constitutional changes, which began as an empty concession to Covic to give him cover for compromises on Brcko and state property, has complicated the situation as various new maps of Bosnia appeared in the media and increased pressure among his constituents to defend the RS.

COMMENT

16. (C) We welcome Radmanovic's ostensible support for calming the situation and returning attention to the reform process. He nevertheless seems to be buying into the SNSD rhetoric that is inflaming politics in the RS, implying that the criminal complaint against Dodik was part of a conspiracy led by the international community and "parallel structures" with an anti-Serb agenda. There appears to be public support in the RS for this position, and the President may be right that there will be pressure to halt the progress on Brcko or move forward with "Plan B" to withdraw Serbs from state level positions.

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